



Maricopa County

Department of Public Health

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Dear Colleagues:

This is the first H1N1 update I've sent in awhile because as you know, things have slowed down considerably. All of my updates are still available on our [website](#).

Still Worth Vaccinating

We're still at relatively low levels of flu activity and we don't know for sure what will happen next. History tells us to expect a third wave, so please continue to urge your patients to be vaccinated. Also, don't forget to bring your patients less than 10 years of age back for their second dose. We had a very low response rate at the elementary schools for second doses of vaccine, which tells me there are a lot of kids who still need a second dose.

Need vaccine? We have all you want, of any type you want. Just call 602 747-7111 and we'll get it to you.

This is the first flu pandemic *ever* for which we had vaccine. Which begs the question...

A Herd Effect? Really? ... Maybe.

We're busy collecting data and using various models, but to my surprise, we may have done it.

Based upon household studies, this flu turns out to not be extremely transmissible, yielding 1.3-1.8 new cases for each existing case. Depending on how many of the influenza like illnesses were actual flu, and depending on the asymptomatic carriage rate of the virus, the number of infections in school kids plus the immunization rate among them might just have us over the magical herd effect threshold.

What that means is that if a third wave were in the offing, the level of immunity in the schools (where the flu outbreaks typically originate and are amplified) may be enough to stop it in its tracks.

The only way we'll know for sure is if a third wave happens elsewhere, but not so much here. We will continue to try to estimate that likelihood and will let you know if we figure it out.

If it does work, it will be because of our school vaccine policy. So thank you so much for your understanding and cooperation with the difficult decisions I needed to make. Of course, history may throw us a curve and we may not have a third wave anywhere. We'll see soon enough.

Unused Vaccine Charges – NOT

Those of you who participate in VFC vaccine may be familiar with a penalty you pay for vaccine that expires unused. That is NOT the case with H1N1 flu vaccine. Keep using it until it expires

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and then dispose of it properly per your own processes. ADHS is in the process of developing summary guidelines which we will post on our website as soon as they are complete. Which brings us to...

Lots of Sanofi single-dose vaccine expiring sooner than expected

We've already had a couple of recalls of specific lots of vaccine because they were losing potency faster than the printed expiration date on the container would indicate (see earlier updates). Now we have two additional notifications, both involving Sanofi single-dose vaccine. See the details of both of them under the [vaccine tab](#) of our H1N1 site.

One involves another recall of 6 lots of vaccine, not because of any hazard, but again because they have lost potency since the time they were shipped. There's no need to revaccinate (because it was presumably potent up until now), but don't use it any more.

The second is the same issue, but this time they're telling us that the vaccine in question can be used until Feb 15 (i.e., they're assigning it a new, earlier expiration date). But in this case there are 50 lots of vaccine involved! Between the two notices, there are an astounding 175,000 doses that were distributed in Arizona.

Those of you who were shipped vaccine directly by the manufacturer should be notified by Sanofi. We are searching tracking lists for those of you who got vaccine via our warehouse, and we'll try to notify you ourselves. But if you got Sanofi prefilled syringes (of either dosage), it's worth checking the attached details and looking in your fridge to make sure you don't inadvertently use vaccine beyond its official expiration date.

More to Come

This won't be my last update. If nothing else, I'll send you a final wrap-up. We're also working on a survey to get your input. If you're worried about wasting your time, this won't be an exercise in futility – we hope to move this community forward toward annual flu vaccine of children until we achieve a herd effect *every year*. If we achieve that, we may be able to decrease flu, visits to you for flu, hospitalizations for flu, and deaths from flu by 90 percent! *Every year*.

I don't know about you, but I'd do cartwheels if we can do that. We'll need your help, and together, we can make it happen.

Once again, thank you for all you do for the public's health.



Bob England, MD, MPH
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